

would not have put in this amendment. But I am concerned about the fact that I believe this to be a step in the wrong direction. When we are in a situation in this state and in this country where there are more and more older people and fewer and fewer younger people, the demographics are changing, we all know that. If we are going to try to solve our problems in a reasonable manner, I think that what we need to do is to set up incentive systems to encourage people to work longer. What we do not need to do is to set into place benefit incentive systems that have the effect of discouraging people from continuing to work, that is going in just exactly the wrong direction I think for what is happening, for what is going to be happening in the future. Now I know that some retirement plans already have this but I am saying that instead of going full speed ahead in the direction of providing these kinds of incentives, that we should be turning around and encouraging people to work longer. If you allow them to have a group health plan from age 60 to 65, the effect will be to encourage them to retire at 60 if there is any effect at all, and I think it will have some effect like that, so I think it is wrong philosophically. Secondly, ask yourself for a minute who is really going to use this, who is really going to use this? Those public employees who are well off, who have double incomes, who have inherited property, who for one reason or another probably will be financially able to retire at 60 are going to be the ones who are using it. It won't be the poor public employees who probably have to continue to work anyway. So, one, it is philosophically wrong but, two, it is really going to be a benefit to the public employees who are better off as opposed to the moderate and poorer public employees. So it sets the wrong incentive, and in addition to that, it affects the wrong classifications most heavily within the group benefited. And for that reason, I would ask you to limit it to those who are actually forced to retire for health reasons or family health reasons. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Mr. President, members of the Legislature, I had hoped that we might pass over this bill because I had asked for an actuarial analysis of the impacts of the legislation. There is now in the process a study being done by the carrier for the state as to what this bill will cost us. I am surprised we hadn't gotten that information before but they aren't ready with it yet today and I understand they would like to have until tomorrow at least to finish it up and that we may be looking until